

Short Notes on Recent Books.

Insertion under this heading neither precludes nor guarantees a further notice.

A VOLUME which contends for a renewed study of the almost lost science of Theology is very welcome at this time. We have been treated so often and so vehemently to disparagements of theology that not a few had come to think that the case for re-statement is unanswerable, but in *Essays in Orthodoxy* (Macmillan and Co., 6s. net), the Rev. Oliver Chase Quick, Chaplain to the Archbishop of Canterbury, puts in a well-sustained plea in quite another direction. "The first necessity is not to restate the creeds, but to explain them. Perhaps after the explanation the need for restatement will not seem so pressing." Mr. Quick approaches the questions with which he deals in the full light of the attacks made upon fundamentals. "The fabric of Christian faith has during recent years been shaken to its foundations." But he is not dismayed. In the undying hope which sustained Jeremiah in the greatest crisis in the history of Hebrew religion, and in the prophet's plea for "the old paths," Mr. Quick finds satisfaction. The prophet's message "is profoundly true to the history of religious reformations. No great religious revival has been really a new departure. Man has never made any great religious advance while turning his back upon the past." It is to re-discovery that Mr. Quick invites us. "The first need of our people is not for a new faith nor even for a new system. The first need is that we should all re-discover what are the treasures hidden in the old faith and the old system, yes, even the old Anglicanism if you will, which we have been neglecting in the past and now too often notice only to deride. It is not that no change is needed—God knows it is—but we can only change aright, if we will first be patient enough and humble enough to appreciate what we already have." Such is Mr. Quick's position and from it he discusses the great facts of the Christian faith in a series of chapters dealing with God the Father and Creator, Christ the Revealer, the Atonement, the Judgment, the Resurrection, the Holy Spirit and the Trinity, the Holy Spirit as witness, Sanctification and Ethics, and Sanctification and Devotion. It is a new line of thought in works of this description and challenges the profoundest attention. Those whose minds were troubled by *Foundations* should certainly read it.

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The paper read by Dr. Sanday before the Modern Churchman's Union, "On Continuity of Thought and Relativity of Expression" excited considerable attention for the views it expressed on certain historical facts of the Christian faith. Before its appearance the Rev. N. P. Williams, Chaplain-Fellow of Exeter College, Oxford, addressed to Dr. Sanday a closely-reasoned criticism of the paper. Thus a "friendly discussion" began, and it was thought the letters might be issued as a pamphlet, but it so developed that it has grown into a book and is now issued under the title *Form and Content in the Christian Tradition* (Longmans Green & Co, 6s. net). The volume is one of great value, dealing as it does with questions of the utmost moment. The weakness of Dr. Sanday's position—on Miracles for example, and on what he calls "the disputed clauses of the Creed"—is clearly shown. Yet his last word in the discussion is painfully inadequate. "*As a spiritual system* (the italics are his), Christianity remains for me just precisely what it has always been. There are not a few Christian beliefs in my interpretation of which I may be held to be behind the times. The Bible is still to me the

highest authority that I know. But it is true that I pin my faith not so much to what the Bible says as to what I believe that it means to say; in other words, not so much to what it said in the letter to those to whom it was first given as to what it says in the spirit to us now. It is in the Bible *considered as history* (again the italics are his), that the change is greatest. But even here, I would do no more than put that construction upon it that I should do without hesitation if it had been a less sacred book. Many will think that its sacredness precludes this. But it is just there—and I think, in principle only there—that I join issue with them.”

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The Rev. E. A. Burroughs (Fellow and Tutor of Hertford College, Oxford, has come to be regarded as something of a prophet in relation to the spiritual issues of the war, and certainly there are few other men whose messages excite a wider measure of attention. His latest volume, *The Valley of Decision* (Longmans, Green & Co., 5s.), will do much to strengthen his hold upon the public mind, and particularly upon the Church mind. “This book,” he says in his Preface, “is an attempt to show that in the religion which, as a nation, we have long professed and never yet practised, we have . . . a working philosophy ready to hand. The war, so far from disturbing the claims of Christ on the world, has illustrated and reinforced them. . . . It is my hope and prayer that the argument which follows may help some who are still ‘halting between two opinions’ to find the right way out of ‘the valley of decision.’ There is, as it seems to us, good reason for such hope, for Mr. Burroughs gets into close touch with the reality of things, and discusses problems of life with reasonableness and force. He is severe upon “the failure of the churches.” He asserts that “the rank and file of the clergy have, to a large extent, retained the old authoritarian attitude; still, apparently, imagining that the average man is impressed by the vocable so frequent in their sermons, and interested in what ‘the Church’ has said. ‘We had another futile sermon from our *padre* this morning,’ wrote a midshipman on a battleship to the writer some years ago—the sort that begins, “This is the day when the Church teaches us to remember so-and-so.”’ He had previously groaned over a Whitsunday discourse which took as its theme ‘Our Mother’s Birthday.’ In a battleship! To seven or eight hundred British bluejackets!” We are not surprised at the notes of exclamation. But the whole book is worth reading. It has a message for these times which cannot safely be neglected.

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Among other religious volumes we must mention *War: The Cross of the Nations*, by L. Swetenham (Robert Scott, 1s. 6d. net). The writer is a lady who in a previous volume (*Conquering Prayer*) has done much to emphasize the spiritual aspect of the war, and the Bishop of Edinburgh, who contributes an Introduction, gives the present volume high praise. The need which existed for some terrible discipline to awaken the nation is clearly shown, and the way of recovery is beautifully pointed out.

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To turn to quite another class of book, we call attention to *The Moderns* by John Freeman (Robert Scott, 6s. net). The writer is a man of brilliant gifts, and he has given us a series of most delightful criticisms on modern literary influences. He passes in review George Bernard Shaw, H. G. Wells, Thomas Hardy, Maurice Maeterlinck, Henry James, Joseph Conrad, Coventry Patmore, Frances Thompson, and Robert Bridges. He plays the part of the candid friend, but he is always vivacious.